
Higher Education Committee

HB 2298

Brief Description: Providing tuition waivers for teachers seeking additional education.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericks, Springer, Morrell, Seaquist, Williams, VanDeWege, Hasegawa, Buri, Haler, McDonald, Pettigrew, Walsh, Bailey, Hunter, Linville, Roach, Santos, Rolfes, Green, Sells, Kenney, McCoy, O'Brien, Hinkle, Goodman, Ormsby, Kelley and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides tuition waivers for public school teachers seeking professional teacher certification.

Hearing Date: 2/27/07

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7111).

Background:

The Professional Educator Standards Board is charged with approving teacher preparation and certification programs offered at Washington's institutions of higher education. Under the teacher certification program, teachers first earn a residency certificate that is valid until the teacher is no longer on provisional status. Then, the certificate is reissued with a five year expiration date. Teachers then begin the process of earning a professional certificate that is renewed every five years through completion of an individualized professional growth plan or 150 clock hours.

The professional certificate program is intended to be a performance-based system of teacher preparation and certification. Teachers are asked to demonstrate competency in specific knowledge and skill areas deemed to have a positive impact on student learning. For teachers holding a residency certificate, the five-year sequence to earn a professional certificate includes: completion of provisional status (a candidate may be admitted prior to completion of provisional status with a district letter supporting early enrollment); application to an approved program; completion of a pre-assessment seminar; completion of core credits; and completion of the culminating seminar. The professional certification programs offered at the various institutions of

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higher education may differ in seminar content, credit designations, timelines, core structure, and cost. Some institutions offer professional certification only as part of a master's degree program, while others offer professional certification separate from a master's program. A minimum of 15 college credits is required in any professional certification program, although an approved program could include more than 15 credits at a particular institution.

The K-12 salary allocation model for teachers reflects pay increases for the earning of post-baccalaureate credits at the 15, 30, 45, and 90 credit steps, as well as the earning of a master's degree, a master's degree plus 45 credits, a master's degree plus 90 credits, and a master's degree with a doctorate degree. The salary allocation model currently does not include specific recognition of a professional certificate.

Summary of Bill:

The state universities, regional universities, and The Evergreen State College are required to waive tuition and fees, up to the minimum number of credits required to obtain a professional certification or a degree, for a classroom teacher who:

- has a contract to teach in a public school;
- is seeking professional teacher certification; and
- who agrees to teach in a public school, in a hard-to-staff subject or a hard-to-staff school, for at least five years.

A teacher who receives a waiver must repay the waived tuition and fees unless he or she meets the public school teaching requirement in a hard-to-staff subject or hard-to-staff school. Twenty percent of any repayment obligation shall be satisfied for each year that the teaching requirement is met.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board will provide documentation pertaining to the waiver recipients service or repayment obligations, work with of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify potential waiver recipients, and submit biennial reports to the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 27, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.